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A Catholic Viewpoint

HERBERT RATNER

A Protestant Viewpoint

ROBERT McAFEE BROWN

The Pitfalls of Pratfalls

WILFRID SHEED

Showdown on Civil Rights

WILLIAM V. SHANNON

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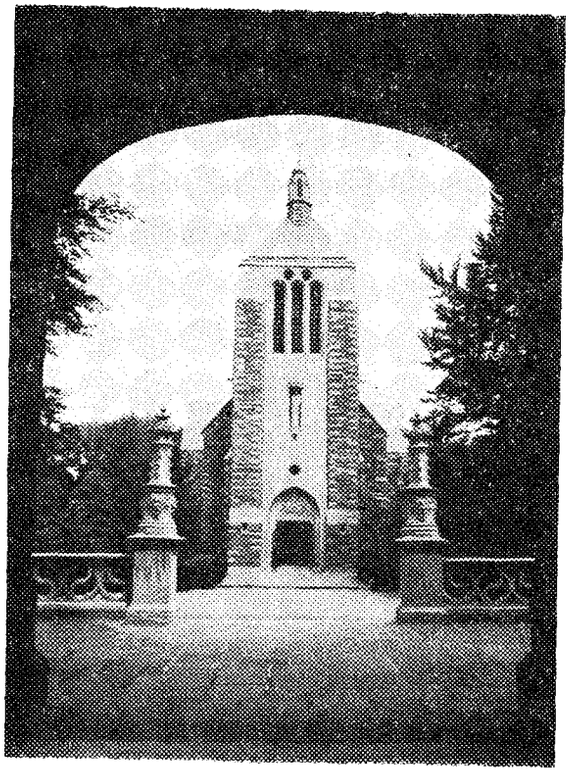

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THE COMMONWEAL

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, LITERATURE AND THE ARTS

Pope Paul VI

THE ADVENT of a Pope always brings joy to the hearts of Catholics on the scene and throughout the world. This is doubly so when the new successor of St. Peter enjoys the popularity and repute achieved by Cardinal Montini in his distinguished career of service to the Church. The leaders and peoples of the world joined in his acclaim. The Cardinal Archbishop of Milan was far and away the leading candidate this time for accession to the See of Peter. He was said to be the universally beloved John's first choice, and he had made widely known his similarly positive and progressive views on critical issues. The speed with which he was elected by the Conclave of Cardinals was consonant with the worldwide enthusiasm over their choice.

Pope Paul comes to his exalted office with superb qualifications. The range and depth of intellect are notable in his voluminous writings; his warm personal concern for human well-being is clearly manifest. He brings to his office a wealth of invaluable experience from conducting Vatican affairs and the solicitous pastoral care of a great archdiocese. He has recently visited the United States, South America and Africa (where there is a mission territory under the sovereignty of the Archdiocese of Milan). As a Cardinal he was long noted for his keen interest in the poor and his consequent concern about the social question; he has for years been dedicated to the cause of world peace. He strongly supported the efforts of the Council to bring about a greater and more organic internationalization of the Vatican administration in accordance with the wishes of Pope John.

The new Pope immediately gave voice to his intentions. His choice of the name of the Apostle to the Gentiles signifies a willingness to break precedent as well as a profound gesture toward his fellow-Christians who are Orthodox or Protestant. His first address signalizes the task of the Ecumenical Council as "the principal labor on which we intend to expend all the energies that the Lord has given us." Pope Paul further pledges himself "to pursue with every commitment" the great work begun by John XXIII and the goal that "all may be one." He opened his arms to his brothers, to "all who glory in the name of Christ."

At the same time in this address, which like *Pacem in Terris* is significantly directed to the whole human family, Paul VI directs emphatic attention to the implementing of the great social encyclicals of his predecessors. As a primary duty of Christian charity he calls for aid and care for the underdeveloped countries in order to bring the living standards of these neglected fellow creatures up to a level consonant with human dignity. He stresses the dedication of his pontificate to the preservation of peace in the world, founded, as he told the assembled diplomats accredited to the Vatican, "on the four pillars of truth, justice, love and liberty."

THE PROBLEMS that confront the Church and the world at the beginning of this pontificate are truly intimidating. The threat to the peoples of the world of thermonuclear war, deepening poverty in so many areas of the globe, growing racial tensions, the gains and objectives of Communism and the weakening of the democratic structure of Italy—all this is of vital concern to the new Pope. Then there are certain present-day concerns of the Church itself: the lack and need of a native hierarchy in the emerging African nations; the growing persecution of Christians in Moslem lands; the hope of greater freedom of worship in Soviet Russia's European satellites; the continued alienation from the Church of European workers, especially in Spain, France and Italy; the plight of the Church in Latin America, which accounts for such a high percentage of the world's Catholics.

That the well-informed Paul VI should take upon

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his shoulders such staggering problems as these is heartening in itself. And it is nothing short of providential at this crucial stage that we have as sovereign pontiff so superbly equipped a dedicated *servus servorum Dei* determined to meet these problems and to carry forward in his own way the work of Christian renewal and unity so auspiciously begun by his intimate friend, Pope John.

Protesting Catholics

ACCORDING to one school of thought, the best way to meet anti-Catholic or anti-religious sentiment is to search the press diligently for offending remarks, and then to arouse a sense of indignation aimed at clouting the offender as lustily and as swiftly as possible. To this school, the dubiousness of group pressure, legal action or official restriction as a means of reducing anti-religious fervor is not at all apparent. The idea is simply to stand up for the interests of Catholics, no matter how narrowly those interests may be conceived.

The latest manifestation of this type of thinking is the attack by some New York City Catholics on the Hunter College literary magazine. Led by a Brooklyn group of Catholic War Veterans and a Brooklyn Teachers Association, these Catholics want restrictions placed on the magazine, principally because of offensive lines they have discovered in a recently published one-act play.

To date, the chief fruits of this labor may be listed as follows: the play, which normally would be of no significance outside the college community, is now an item of news in the New York *Times;* the college community has rallied to the side of the magazine; and the familiar image of Catholics as negative, anti-intellectual and prone to group pressure has once again been activated in New York City. And once again, as the Church at large moves more and more in the direction of freedom, a handful of well-publicized Catholics are moving toward more restrictiveness, and for the worst possible reason: their own particular ox is being gored. There may be small reason to suspect that the outrage expended here might be tempered by some sense of the imperatives of freedom involved. But at least there might have been some sense of strategy. This kind of protest brings more anti-Catholicism, not less.

The Court on Prayer

THE DECISION of the Supreme Court, denying by an 8-1 vote the constitutionality of required prayers or Bible reading in public schools, came, of course, as no surprise. It was a decision in line with that rendered in the earlier New York Regents' prayer case; in both instances, Justice Potter Stewart was the lone dissenter. Unlike the earlier case, however, the most recent decision has not provoked a major public outcry. Broadly speaking, Jews have applauded the decision, the Protestant voice has been mixed though generally favorable—only the Catholic reaction has appeared to be generally unfavorable.

It is difficult to see why the decision should make anyone ecstatically happy or hysterically unhappy. Those who, at one extreme, claim the decision as a great triumph for religious freedom tactlessly neglect the religious views of perhaps a majority of American citizens who would like to see some place given to religious values in the public school. At the other extreme, those who claim that the decision is a triumph for secularism or one which gives pleasure to Communism serve only to obscure the issues. The Court's strong affirmation of the importance of religion in our history and tradition makes such a charge untenable. It is distressing that a number of Catholics saw fit to respond in such an unwarranted fashion.

What needs to be recognized, in the face of extravagant praise and blame heaped on the heads of the majority justices, is that the Court was called upon to decide a question of religious liberty. The aim of the Court was to protect the liberty of those who found the prayers and Bible reading in Maryland and Pennsylvania schools in violation of their consciences. The Court acted to protect their consciences, to assure them against the promotion by the state of religious values which they do not accept.

The strength of the decision thus lies in its sensitivity to the minority conscience. That the requirement of prayers by a public authority, even when supplemented by means to excuse objectors, serves to throw the weight of government behind religion seems to us undeniable. The intention of the Court was "neutrality." Required prayers or

SUMMER SCHEDULE

In keeping with the usual practice, The Commonweal will again appear on alternate weeks from the middle of July to the middle of September. Forthcoming issues will be dated as follows: July 12, July 26, August 9, August 23, September 6, and September 20. From then on The Commonweal will resume its normal weekly printing schedule.

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Bible reading is not a neutral act: it favors believers over non-believers.

Yet there is one important difficulty in this line of thought. It was well brought out in Justice Stewart's dissent: ". . . if religious exercises are held to be an impermissible activity in schools, religion is placed at an artificial and state-created disadvantage." Moreover, it has the effect of providing "government support of the beliefs of those who think that religious exercises should be conducted only in private."

A dilemma is apparent here: if the state requires prayers, it supports the forces of belief; if the state does not allow prayers, it supports the forces of unbelief. In short, whatever the state does seems to give aid and comfort to some group at the expense of others. So put, the very idea of "neutrality" appears to be a chimera.

Is there any way out of the dilemma? The answer, given the pluralistic nature of our society, seems to be: no. But the harshness of the dilemma can, in many ways, be softened. For one thing, it is wholly inaccurate to say that a decision which has the effect of favoring unbelievers establishes a "religion of secularism." At the very most, the exclusion of religious devotions in the public schools closes only one of the many ways available to American parents to assure their children of a religious education.

The aim of that exclusion is not promotion of secularism but religious peace in the community. The decision will promote secularism only to the extent that parents and churches are remiss in their work of religious education.

Of importance also is the fact that the Court's decision appears to have opened the way for an exploration of ways in which the public schools could teach religion in an "objective" way, free of a devotional or sectarian bias. This is an opportunity which should be confronted directly and creatively. Obviously, the difficulties inherent in any quest for an "objective" study of religion are many; but that should not act as a deterrent or be used as an excuse for inaction.

This week Walter Arnold, Jr., leaves the staff of The Commonweal after serving as assistant editor since September, 1962. He takes with him our thanks for his contributions to the magazine and our best wishes for the future.

WASHINGTON REPORT

Showdown on Civil Rights

SEVERAL WEEKS hence, as the climax of a long, hot summer, there will occur one of the saddest spectacles of our political life: a Southern filibuster against the civil rights bill. A group of about twenty men will engage in many wearisome hours of empty talk in behalf of a cause they know to be doomed and in which they only half-believe.

The fundamental fact underlying the political and legislative struggles over civil rights is that the Negroes are inevitably going to win. There can be no other solution to the question of the relationship of the two races execept one founded on genuine equality. It is possible, of course, to argue the merits of specific provisions of the President's program and of other bills in this field, but no one doubts which way the tide of events is running.

The heart, the conviction of moral certitude, has gone out of the Southern cause in Washington. There was a time when Southerners could argue with complete sincerity that the Negroes were content and that they were making reasonable progress within the framework of a segregated society. They defended "separate but equal" as a viable concept. They believed that race relations were a purely local and state problem and that the "Southern way of life" had uniquely valuable qualities. Southern Senators who now make those arguments know that they are only going through the motions. Although the controversy is only in its initial stage, Southerners have already perceptibly shifted their ground. In opposing a law guaranteeing equal access to hotels, restaurants, and other facilities, they are arguing in terms of the rights of private property. This is a non-sectional argument intended to appeal to all conservatives. As the status of the Negro becomes increasingly a national rather than a sectional question, opposition to rapid social change on this front merges into the general conservative position.

For some sixty years, from the Populist upheavals of the 1890's to the end of World War II, the South sent two distinctly different kinds of politicians to Washington. There were the Bourbons of the upper class such as the Bankheads of Alabama and the agrarian radicals such as Pitchfork Ben Tillman of South Carolina. Except in manners and rhetoric, they were indistinguishable in their implacable opposition to equal rights for the Negro. In the 1920's and '30's, the issue was anti-lynching legislation which regularly failed of passage although it had the support of a majority of the House and Senate. In the filibusters of those decades, the agrarians such as Tom Watson of Georgia

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and Cole Blease of South Carolina regularly used racist epithets and invoked Ku Klux Klan emotions in Senate debate. With the death of Theo "The Man" Bilbo of Mississippi in 1947 the last of these unashamed Negro-baiters passed from the Washington scene.

Nowadays, the Southern Senator with strong rural support is frequently either a liberal on racial questions such as Ralph Yarborough of Texas or a man of no strong convictions on the subject such as Olin Johnston of South Carolina. This is because in the wake of the increased industrialization and urbanization of the South, the political conflicts within the one-party system tend to be between the new middle classes on the one side and a curious, tacit alliance of rural voters, Negroes, and industrial workers on the other side. Despite Olin Johnston's formal segregationist posture, for example, South Carolina's Negro voters with remarkable political sophistication regularly vote for him as the lesser of two evils, a political fact of life of which he is well aware. Herman Talmadge of Georgia, the son of "Ole Gene" Talmadge, a typical gallus-snapping, tobacco-spitting ranter of the old agrarian school, has avoided all racist demagoguery since coming to the Senate in 1957. He carefully cultivates a moderate position. In the past year, he has even held discreet conversations with Negro political leaders in his state, for the collapse of the county-unit system has greatly increased the leverage of the Atlanta Negroes in a Democratic primary.

THE OTHER type of Southern Senator, the Bourbon conservative, is still present in undiluted form in the person of men such as Richard Russell of Georgia, Harry Flood Byrd of Virginia, and John Stennis of Mississippi. These are the leaders of the Southern bloc, the hierarchs of the Senate, the innermost members of the so-called "inner club" or Establishment. They have power because of the seniority system. Russell is chairman of both the Armed Services Committee and the Military Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee. Stennis is a high-ranking member of both. Byrd is chairman of the Finance Committee which will largely determine the fate of the Administration's tax bill. These politicians may well be the last of their breed. They represent a coalition of business and banking interests with the rural courthouse machines. Their politics is personal, aristocratic, almost feudal. Instead of party organizations in any twentieth century sense, they have alliances with important local notables who keep them in touch with local sentiment and represent their interests.

These Senate grandees were once as influential in the affairs of the national Democratic conventions as they still are on Capitol Hill. Byrd, for example, was Democratic state chairman early in his career and was Virginia's Democratic national committeeman from 1928 to 1940. As late as 1952, Russell seriously sought his party's Presidential nomination. But the repeal of the two-thirds rule at the 1936 convention removed the Southern veto from Presidential nominations, and the intensification of the racial issue has made the Southerners pariahs rather than powers in the national party. Liberals and Negroes now have a veto power of their own. They exercised it in 1960 to prevent the appointment of Senator William Fulbright of Arkansas, a comparatively enlightened segregationist, as Secretary of State.

Although Russell, Byrd, Stennis, Eastland, and others cling to the power that their nominal Democratic allegiance confers on them in the Senate power structure, they are actually men of no party, embittered and estranged from the national two-party competition. They know they are only fighting a delaying action. They know that the younger Southern politicians coming along, the Talmadges and Lyndon Johnsons and Russell Longs, will not fight against the new order of things, indeed are already making their peace with it.

The Alabama delegation presents a particularly painful spectacle. Senators Lister Hill and John Sparkman and the members of the House delegation make up, except for civil rights, one of the most consistently liberal groups from any state, North or South. In the past decade, these Alabamans have sponsored the major housing bills, the hospital construction program, the development of the National Institutes of Health, and numerous other welfare programs. In response to a personal plea from President Truman, Sparkman even reversed his position and voted to sustain the veto of the Taft-Hartley Act. In public, the Senators and Representatives from Alabama issue ringing statements in support of segregation, praise Governor Wallace, sign Southern manifestos, and engage in other rituals. What they think in private is something else again. One of them recently forecast, privately, that by 1970, Negroes would be voting in sufficient numbers to elect a Congressman from Alabama.

After President Kennedy sent his civil rights message to Congress, Senator Hubert Humphrey accurately described it as "the minimum required to close the citizenship gap in our democracy." If the bill becomes law, it will not only help close the gap between what the Negro has and what he, in justice, is entitled to, but it will also help close the gap for many white Southerners between public profession and private conviction, between racial myth and modern reality. We shall have greatly enriched the American political community once Southern Negroes and Southern whites alike are able to partake fully in public life, free of those invisible burdens of guilt, hypocrisy, and resentment.

WILLIAM V. SHANNON

(Mr. Shannon is The Commonweal's regular correspondent in Washington.)

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Religion and the Court

REACTION to the Supreme Court's decision on Bible reading and the Lord's Prayer is clearly much more restrained than it was in the Regents' Prayer case. In part this is due to the care with which the Court wrote its majority opinion; in part it is due to better reporting on the Court's action; in part it is due to the fact that the Regents' Prayer case paved the way for this decision.

Most Protestant and all Jewish opinion I have seen upholds the Court's decision, though I suspect more Protestant rank-and-file disquiet than shows in the official statements. Catholic opinion tends by and large to be critical of the Court, with three out of the five American Cardinals heard from so far.

I found none of the statements by the three Cardinals particularly helpful. Cardinal McIntyre of Los Angeles stated that the decision "can only mean that our American heritage of philosophy, of religion and of freedom are being abandoned in imitation of Soviet philosophy, of Soviet materialism and of Soviet-regimented liberty." Even among those who oppose the Court's decision, surely few would agree that the 8-to-1 verdict "can only mean" abandonment of the American heritage "in imitation of" the Soviet Union.

Cardinal Cushing of Boston said: "To me it is a great tragedy that the greatest book that was ever published and a constant best seller cannot be read in the public system of education." This, of course, is somewhat beside the point, which was not whether the Bible could be read as a book but whether religious exercises were permissible. Cardinal Cushing then also invoked the example of the Soviet Union, saying, "The Communists are enjoying this day, not only with regard to their latest success in space, but also they must be taking great pleasure . . . in the recent decision. . . ."

Cardinal Spellman of New York went even further; after deploring the decision as a victory for secularism and a set-back for the national welfare, he proceeded to say that "no one who believes in God, and I say believes in God, can approve such a decision." This view clearly seems to fly in the face of obvious facts; unless one is to say that the officials of such bodies as the National Council of Churches are atheists, it is obvious that there are believers who do support the decision.

If all the comments opposing the Court's decision were not impressive, though, I have a considerable sympathy for those who feel some disquiet over the implications of the Court's decisions in matters involving religion. The hopeful thing, however, is that the reasoning of the Court in this instance represents a significant improvement over many previous decisions. The emphasis this time was on the neutrality of the state, not only between religions, but between belief and non-belief. This much is clear, and I have no quarrel with it. But non-belief should not be preferred over belief, and it is this aspect of the problem that seems to me to require further exploration.

All of us support the American idea; all of us have learned from the American experience. This includes in a very important way what is called, in a kind of shorthand, separation of Church and State, which means not the absolutist rhetoric of an unbreachable wall but a distinction between two orders of competence, that of God and that of Caesar.

Applying this principle is often difficult. The state must be neutral—not neutral on moral questions but on religion and between religions. Furthermore, there must be no religious test for public office. This means that the non-believer must not be a second-class citizen; he must not be at a disadvantage where the state is concerned.

This much seems safe enough, and this is a great deal. But state and society are not synonymous terms. To say that the state must be neutral does not mean that the same should be true of society. On the contrary, we are in fact a nation of believers, and only a minuscule proportion of our population claims no belief in God. The problem, then, is to assure free exercise of religion for those who are in fact believers.

Here I am unmoved by those who say this is the business of home and church, not of education. This is a view of the matter held by very many; I am willing for those who hold it to live by it, but I see no reason the rest of us have to believe it. The fact is that millions of American parents do not accept it, and the disquiet over this and other Supreme Court decisions reflects their vague conviction that in some way education without any religion is inadequate—indeed, that state-sponsored education which completely bars optional religious teaching (not compulsory religious exercises) violates the neutrality of the state by preferring non-belief over belief.

Here, I think, is the nub of the problem. We don't have and really do not want a teaching state along European lines. In our system the right of the parent must be preeminent. No children should be coerced; no children should be exposed to religious exercises or religious education against the will of his parents. But is it not in keeping with the principle of state neutrality between belief and non-belief for our educational system to include religion on a purely elective basis? The notion that this is constitutionally impossible under the American system seems to me the root of many of our present difficulties.

JAMES O'GARA

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The Rock Book—I

A Catholic Viewpoint

HERBERT RATNER

DR. JOHN ROCK's *The Time Has Come* presents itself as "a Catholic doctor's proposals to end the battle over birth control" through a "sensitive probing of current theology." These proposals are most satisfactory when they embody or support solid Catholic thinking; for example, Father John Courtney Murray's position that the Connecticut statute against contraception is indefensible; and Family Life Bureau Director Msgr. John Knott's endorsement of an expanded governmental research program of reproductive physiology. They are insensitive and less than satisfactory when Dr. Rock is on his own or bolsters his positions with opinion that hardly can be considered cogent; for example, the elucidation of his belief that the contraceptive use of oral steroids (the Pill) is morally right; or his exposition and application of natural law.

Most of his less than satisfactory proposals stem from a chronic ambiguity which is characteristic of the book. We see this clearly in Chapter 11, *Straws in the Winds,* and Chapter 12, *A Proper Public Policy on Birth Control.* Here, in discussing birth control policy in public hospitals and public welfare programs, he keeps interchanging *family planning* and *medically indicated birth control.* He leads the reader to believe that the decision to approve the latter is the same as the approval of the former. His conclusion, however, does not follow from the preceding discussion.

Although there is plenty of room for disagreement in the United States as to what constitutes a medical indication, the fact remains that in a liberal profession like medicine there is a firm distinction between a physician prescribing birth control (or sterilization and abortion) to his diseased patient for therapeutic and preventive reasons and the state using a physician as an instrument to assuage political, social and economic metaphorical sicknesses by decimating indigent people as if they were diseases. On the part of welfare programs the overt motivation, in many instances, is the reduction of tax expenditures, the covert motivation is the protection of the state against human liabilities. This is not a religious issue, though men of religion may be interested in it. Rather it is a question of whether it is salutary for the medical profession to permit its members to become obeisant government technicians in this highly personal area of human privilege or whether family planning should be kept out of the hands of government by keeping it in the hands of voluntary agencies and thereby insulating the indigent against political pressure.

Furthermore, and I add this at the risk of being misunderstood, we should question whether it is good for the profession to become rich servants of the public by serving their wants and desires dissociated from their needs. In other areas of contemporary medical practice, capitulation to unenlightened patients' personal desires is leading to the ruin of medicine. We see this in the misuse of tranquillizers, stimulants, sedatives and antibiotics through consumer pressure. One of the stark facts of U.S. history is that contraception, which was introduced and promoted primarily for the lower classes because of their economic problems, was not used by them but was used instead with avidity by the middle and upper classes who did not have this problem as we normally recognize it. It is not known that in one of the richest areas of life, family life, this has made them happier. Obviously complex issues and complex solutions are involved. There is no indication, however, that Dr. Rock is aware of them. With the assistance of the science of demography he makes the population problem simply a numbers game.

THE FACT remains, however, that we have a genuine underpopulation of the middle and upper classes. The indigent of this country and the world—and they are indigent by virtue of exploitation and the indifference of whose who are better off—cannot pull themselves up by their own bootstraps. They desperately need teachers, physicians, social workers, engineers and the help of other professional and technical disciplines, to say nothing of moral leaders. We need them for the Peace Corps, both foreign and domestic, for assistance programs, for missionary enterprises of all kinds. Ironically, we would even need them to implement birth control programs, were that the solution to their problems. In the fight for the preservation of the traditions of western democracy we presumably need them for the cold war if we are to save Africa, Asia and Latin America. Our greatest export need today is people. Only minds can save minds. During this interim ad-

DR. HERBERT RATNER is Commissioner of Public Health in Oak Park, Illinois. With this article he makes his first appearance in The Commonweal.

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justment period in world history, the world leans heavily on the middle and upper classes of this country whose children alone, at present, can take advantage of the rich opportunity offered them educationally. By ignoring these and other factors, Dr. Rock's analysis is superficial and underlies his ambiguities.

These ambiguities seem to stem from Dr. Rock's current need to wed Catholic doctrine to his own highly personalized views by stretching and accommodating the Church's teaching to his own lifelong professional beliefs and practices. Through this wedding he hopes to make a contribution in the area of Catholic and non-Catholic conflict. Unfortunately, his book, in my opinion, rather than contributing to a useful dialogue between Catholics and non-Catholics, or even among Catholics, obstructs dialogue. In this regard it is radically different from *Birth Control and Public Policy,* Catholic lawyer Norman St. John-Stevas' study issued by the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions. The difference centers about the question—and it is most pertinent—of whether Dr. Rock's book truly represents a Catholic doctor's proposals. It is precisely Dr. Rock's personal and public insistence that he is talking as a "dedicated Roman Catholic" that confounds the dialogue. Without questioning the subjective truth of his conviction or his personal piety, what is essential for fruitful discussion is to differentiate Dr. Rock's "own religious and physiologic insights" which he puts forth to advance "everything that has given meaning to (his) life" from the universal position of his Church. The book itself confuses these positions and thus invokes dissonance and contradiction in its varied readers.

We witness that non-Catholic physicians and laymen hasten to praise his Catholic theology, extol the Doctor's Catholic devoutness, and in varying degrees clout his church. On the other hand Catholic theologians despair over his theology, reserve to the Doctor the privacy of his spiritual life, and over-respect his science. Some Catholics experience wish-fulfillment and compassionate attraction. Other Catholics ask, "What the hell is going on?" It is to the last question—this widespread misunderstanding—that I principally address myself. My general direction comes from the distinction in using *Catholic* as an adjective or a noun: the distinction between "a Catholic doctor or painter" and "a doctor or painter who is a Catholic."

DR. ROCK is a research physician most noted in scientific circles for his work on early human embryos. This work, which dates back to 1938, is referred to in his book. His embryos were recovered from *pregnant* women undergoing *elective* hysterectomies. Other embryos were obtained in test tubes by fertilizing human ova with human sperm. In his original paper entitled "The Human Conceptus During the First Two Weeks of Gestation," he describes the latter as follows: "Another egg similarly treated (with human spermatozoa) began its personal existence by changing from a single cell that has been part of the maternal tissue into a two-cell autonomous structure." Those who recognize the human fetus to be a human being throughout development, and Catholics are numbered among them, will recognize these procedures to be a form of lethal human experimentation.

I mention this early work for only two reasons. First to show that Dr. Rock's intransigence to the teaching of his church dates back at least twenty-five years—a time, incidentally, when the democracies were concerned about dangerously low birth rates resulting from widespread birth control practices, and not, as they are today, about high birth rates in other parts of the world which to some indicate the need for contraception, sterilization, and abortion. Secondly, to show that his intransigence is deeper than one is led to believe by his present urbane speculations on the Church, the contraceptive pill and birth control. His recent prediction in a popular national weekly on the future acceptability of abortions leaves no doubt about his basic convictions: ". . . the dignity of being human," he writes, "can demand of embryos the same responsibility to the preservation of the human race—and hence a willingness to die—that we now demand of soldiers. They go out equally unquestioning, to die on the battlefields for the same purpose."

The notion of a person or the state speaking of human dignity "demanding of" a human embryo who is incapable of expressing his will, "a willingness to die" hardly qualifies as a humanistic position to say nothing of an orthodox Christian position. The analogy of the soldier ignores the valued tradition which respects the conscientious objector and, further, "the God-given conscience" Dr. Rock refers to in his preface. Students of the Nuremberg trials will recognize the danger of courting a position which permits human rights to be compromised. A compromise of human rights is a compromise of the moral order. It was this that seduced the majority of accused German physicians who, in pre-Nazi days, had been "irreproachable citizens happy in their researches or in their professional medical activity."

Dr. Rock has a right to his opinion and its expression. His bluntness is exemplary. However, since his opinion so clearly departs from the teachings of the faith he espouses and from the teachings of reason unified by the architectonic science of ethics, the basis of most of the Church's moral teaching, it seems misleading to promote the book as "Catholic." It is imperative to differentiate between an individual Catholic's opinion and a Catholic position. Which sensible person would seriously consider as an avant-garde Catholic position the expressed opinion of any Catholic—even a 'devout' priest—were he to proclaim that

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"the time has come" to recognize white supremacy and the cultural inequality of the colored races advocating that legal, medical and moral action should be taken against blacks, browns, reds and yellows? What can be so easily seen or sensed in racism, however, is not easily seen in contraception.

DESPITE the difficulty in seeing it, fundamental issues are involved in contraception: the whole order of nature and of love is at stake. It is adolescent to go on thinking of this as merely a matter of condoms and pills. Furthermore, to suspect or penetrate the pitfalls and errors of either racism or contraception, religious faith is not necessary, though God knows it helps.

Dr. Rock's book *Voluntary Parenthood,* co-authored with the Public Information Director of Planned Parenthood and published in 1947, was more appropriately promoted. Then Dr. Rock was characterized, not as a "dedicated Roman Catholic," but simply as a "distinguished physician." The most distressing result of the switch, the decision to trumpet the new book as Catholic, is its confusion of men of good will and its inflammatory effect on men of less than good will. It makes virtually impossible, the friendly, intelligent and respectful dialogue vital to our pluralistic society and to a wise solution of our problems. How difficult this dialogue can become was manifest at a recent Planned Parenthood meeting in Washington honoring Dr. Rock. At that meeting the moderator, the American correspondent for the Manchester *Guardian,* stated, "I'll take bets than in ten years divine guidance will flash down on the Vatican. It will not only be okay to have birth control, it will be compulsory."

This is pretty heady stuff. It has as its thesis and tactic the belief that actual, cultural and/or contrived pressures, exerted on students of God and nature, determine the basic truths that they hold; that truth is exigent, and will bend and snap to public pressure; that theologians and philosophers, both scientists, will respond like politicians. One cannot help but note in passing—with all due respect to serious overpopulation problems and pressing personal problems—that the public clamor for action in the United States is intimately entwined with the middle and upper classes. Their long-standing personal anxieties and problems concerning parenthood are adequately documented. These anxieties have been amplified and rationalized by zealously imposed fears of overpopulation, of outsiders imminently encroaching on their front yard, on their world, and, perhaps, on their conscience.

The clue to understanding Dr. Rock's book lies in his thesis that the Pill is a "natural means of fertility control" and that Pius XII, in condemning oral steroids (the Pill) "on the premise that these are agents which cause 'sterilization'," merely suffered from a semantic difficulty. This portion of the book contains the most tortured thinking concerning a physiologic process and a pharmacologic intervention I have come across in medical literature. We should all be indebted to Dr. Robert E. Hall of Columbia Medical School who, in a review of Dr. Rock's book in the N.Y. *Times* (May 12, 1963), makes this point with special authority. "Rock's rationalization of the Pill," he writes, "is to me a little short of preposterous. . . . As a birth control enthusiast I would like to dismiss this theory as harmless euphemism; as a doctor I must aver it is medical fantasy." Since Dr. Rock's self-appointed role as a social and religious philosopher is transferred from his medical authority, Dr. Hall's evaluation lends no confidence to Dr. Rock's extended voice.

DR. HALL's opinion is not an isolated one. At a recent meeting of the Third European Congress of the International Planned Parenthood Federation, a British expert on family planning education from that organization reported on a poll taken of doctors at the World Health Organization: "no single doctor I asked would advise his daughter to use (the Pill)." Similar expressions have been privately reported in this country. At the same meeting, Dr. Nikonchik of the USSR, during a sharp discussion on oral steroid contraceptives, stated that "We have no right to alter the harmonious hormonal structure given by nature." Parenthetically, it should be seen from this that the understanding of rights in God's created order is not limited to those within the Church or to those who only believe in God.

Dr. Rock's candor and authority when it comes to the Pill has the same kind of value as the commercial advertisement of a drug manufacturer, though I think all of us can appreciate the understandably human bias of one talking about his baby. The Pill unquestionably is the most dangerous contraceptive product now on the market. It has caused deaths and heartbreaking medical complications, and its safety is still under investigation by the government. Because of its alleged high acceptance rate by the indigent, a group which has rejected other contraceptives in the past, its dangers are being minimized. This is contributing to the destruction of one of the great traditions of medicine: "that physicians do not prescribe for others, what they will not prescribe for their own."

As one attempts to come to grips with Dr. Rock's thinking on the Pill and population control, it becomes apparent that he has a poor grasp of the order of nature, and following from this, a poor grasp of function in nature. He does not seem to know the meaning of art imitating nature—here one must distinguish between that which occurs naturally and that which occurs according to its nature or basic design. It is this which gives medicine its norms. He does not recognize the work of nature in reproduction as independent from the work of man. He ignores the wisdom of nature—

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the wisdom which closes the gap between what we know and what we have yet to discover through science. He seems to be indifferent to nature's capacity to strike back. Perhaps he has forgotten the old adage that man sometimes forgives, God always forgives, but nature never forgives. Without an adequate understanding of nature and man, Dr. Rock, in my opinion, is handicapped in seeking the solution of the problem he attacks.

As a result his medical approach to the problem of birth control is emptied of any sensitivity to the nature and mystique of woman, that which flows from her delicate and subtle psychohormonic harmony and her lunar rhythms, that which keeps her in touch with the cosmos and her true self. The Pill, by imposing upon her a continuing state of false pregnancy, flattens her womanliness. An understanding of the classic work of Drs. Benedek and Rubenstein of the Chicago Institute of Psychoanalysis, *The Sexual Cycle in Women: The Relation Between Ovarian Function and Psychodynamic Processes,* is desperately relevant.

The population question is bound up with deep-seated emotional, social and spiritual problems in both the patient and prescriber—the plannees and the planners. It must be approached with utmost sophistication. We need an awareness of the need to free ourselves from cultural blinders, as well as to protect ourselves from simplist remedies promising quick victories. This not only applies to thinkers who are Catholics and non-Catholics but to *Catholic* thinkers as well.

Dr. Rock's belief that the population problem compares in magnitude with the atomic problem, and his proposals for a crash program in fertility control, should immediately alert us to the cardinal error of our times: that a technological advance guarantees human progress. Let us not repeat the error we made with the atomic bomb of conceiving the problem as primarily technological. Now as then, it is not the discovery of means but a wise use of means to which we should be directing our major attention. We all know in the case of the atomic bomb the suffering our failure of forethought has inflicted upon the world. It would be equally disastrous if, again, for a want of a policy we commit the same mistake in fertility control. It too, in its varied way, could decimate the world.

Consequently, though we welcome and need their specialty contributions, the faster we get the manipulation of population problems out of the hands of obstetricians and demographers, the quicker we will arrive at a sound solution to the problems that confront us. Here we should recall the thought of Francis Bacon concerning the abuse of specialty thinking as an impediment to the advancement of the sciences: "men have used to infect their meditations, opinions, and doctrines, with some conceits which they have most admired, or *some Sciences which they have most applied;* and give all things else a *tincture* according to them *utterly untrue and improper.* . . . So have the alchemists made a philosophy out of a few experiments of the furnace; and Gilbertus . . . a philosophy out of the observations of a lodestone. . . . But of these conceits Aristotle speaketh seriously and wisely when he saith, 'they who contemplate a few things have no difficulty in deciding.'"

The Rock Book—II

A Protestant Viewpoint

ROBERT McAFEE BROWN

FROM TIME to time since this column was inaugurated, Protestant correspondents have urged me to "get with it," and start raising Controversial Issues. Like birth control.

I have no desire to shun controversial issues. I have every desire, however, to discuss them creatively rather than controversially. Controversy for the sake of controversy strikes me as stupidly unproductive. Controversy for the sake of clarification of issues, and possibly even their resolution, is eminently worthwhile. Fortunately a book, *The Time Has Come,* has just appeared by a Catholic doctor, John Rock, that may lift the birth control discussion to a new level where it can be discussed creatively. It is on this Rock that I will build my column.

Dr. Rock's book is not only direct and forthright, but it is also accompanied by data, history and facts, so that the concerns behind it are supported by documentation as well as passion. He is not expecting the Catholic Church to "change" its teaching on birth control, and he

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does not accept the notion that all the trouble in this area has been due to Catholic intransigence. But he does appeal to the fact that there are discernible changes in emphasis, and fresh nuances, in Catholic teaching, that make it possible to deal with the issue in a new way.

THERE ARE no *de fide* pronouncements in this area of Catholic teaching, although there are, of course, a number of encyclicals and other papal statements. And the fact that teaching about birth control is in the area of natural law rather than of revealed dogma makes it possible to suggest that human understandings of the natural law can be refined, extended and explored in new ways. (See, for example, Dr. Rock's discussion in Chapters 5 and 6, "The Emerging Doctrine of Responsible Parenthood," and "New Light on the Natural Law.") Out of such exploration, a number of things seem to have emerged:

1. There is a growing Catholic recognition that the "population explosion" gives urgency to the issue of birth control. Less and less do Catholics make appeal to space travel as a solution to the rising population curve, or to the notion that increase of food productivity will be sufficient to balance the increase in human reproductivity. Demographic projections cannot be explained away or pooh-poohed; they only make clear that, in the title of Dr. Rock's book, "the time *has* come" to look at the problem in a new way, without simply repeating past formulas.

2. A shift in nuance is observable in Catholic teaching about such matters as the primary and secondary aims of marriage, and the increasing emphasis on the *positive* values of family planning and responsible parenthood. Traditional Catholic teaching has emphasized that "the conjugal act is destined primarily by nature for the begetting of children" (*Casti Conubii*, 1930). And while this has surely not been lost, just as surely has there been an increasing emphasis in subsequent Catholic teaching on the fact that the sexual relationship in marriage is a means of deepening and expressing mutual love quite apart from procreation, not to mention those aims of marriage which have to do with the proper rearing of children, concern for the health of the mother, the economic situation of the family, and so forth. Papal teaching clearly establishes the morality of the rhythm method as a means of attaining these other ends. Indeed, it has become something of a cliché to assert that as far as the *ends* of marriage are concerned, Catholic and non-Catholic have a considerable area of agreement; it is only over the means employed (i.e. natural or artificial) that disagreement arises.

3. Greater attention is being given to the problem of enforcing the provisions of the natural law on those portions of the population that do not accept it as binding upon them. An important segment of Catholic teaching thus urges that for reasons of prudence it is unwise to legislate public morals beyond the recognizable consensus of the community. The state laws relating to birth control that are particularly divisive, those in Massachusetts and Connecticut, were of course put on the books by Protestants, and it could reasonably be argued that Catholics should not be expected to modify laws in a way that would condone what Catholics believe to be immoral practices.

But even at this point, Fr. Richard Regan, S.J., can state in *American Pluralism and the Catholic Conscience*: "that the virtue of prudence in the American context requires as a better policy that Catholics support the legal right of married couples to the prescription, sale, and use of contraceptives. Catholic citizens of Massachusetts and Connecticut could and should make a genuine contribution to good politics and good law by supporting reasonable modifications of the contraceptive legislation of their states. Catholics should also make clear that they advocate such action on strictly political and legal grounds which in no way affect their theological and moral opposition to the practice of artificial birth control."

My understanding of prudent Catholic policy at this point is that violation of the natural law should not be subject for legislation (a) if it works real harm to the common good, (b) if such law cannot properly be enforced, and (c) if its enforcement would lead to greater evils than those it seeks to alleviate. To the degree that these principles are sound—and widely accepted—not only can their acceptance mitigate much current bitterness, but principles will have been established that are relevant to the specific proposals of Dr. Rock that will be discussed later.

WHAT ARE some of the "next steps" that could be taken in the light of the emphases just stated? A number of possibilities emerge:

1. Perhaps initially more stress could be given in Catholic circles to what Dr. Rock calls "the emerging doctrine of responsible parenthood." He cites the rather appalling degree to which many Catholics still seem to believe that the most "responsible" kind of Christian parenthood is to have as many children as possible as fast as possible. (Richard Fagley, in an earlier study on *The Population Explosion and Christian Responsibility*, cites an eminent Catholic author as saying, "The family which courageously and even heroically rears a large number of children in an overpopulated area merits special praise for its virtue.") There also seems to be a fear on the part of many Catholics that any suggestion of spacing children or limiting family size will drift inevitably into illicit methods of achieving those ends.

2. A second contribution (and one very important to Dr. Rock's professional concerns) would be greater support, by both Catholics and non-Catholics, of re-

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search in the area of fertility control. This can proceed in many directions, one of the most important of which for Catholics would be further knowledge about regulating the menstrual cycle, so that natural methods of birth control could be made more reliable. Dr. Rock describes ways in which research concerning the pill, or oral contraceptive, has already had unanticipated benefits that are helping to establish predictable periodicy and giving greater assurance to users of the rhythm method. All this would seem no more than a taking seriously of Pius XII's utterance, "One may even hope that science will succeed in providing this licit method with a sufficiently secure basis."

3. Another area of controversy will be reduced as Catholics are willing to acknowledge that non-Catholics approve of artificial means of birth control for positive and also theological reasons. Such advocacy is not based on lust, immorality, subconscious desires for "race suicide," or dislike of children. It is based on a concern for precisely those values Catholics want to conserve within marriage. There is a disagreement about means, but if each party to the disagreement could see more clearly that the other is acting in good faith, in terms of its own theological convictions, considerable hostility would be overcome. (The Protestant gesture here must be a willingness to cease and desist from asserting that the Catholic motivation is the desire to outbreed everybody else and arrive at that coveted 51 per cent of the population.)

4. A Protestant will continue to entertain the hope that Catholic moral theologians have not yet said their last word about "the pill." Most experts feel that it would be exceedingly difficult for moral theology to countenance use of the pill by Catholics. But Dr. Rock shows that some of the early pronouncements were based on inadequate understanding, and makes a persuasive case, at least to the layman, that the pill is an attempt to work *with* the forces of nature, to do in regular fashion what nature does in periodic and often irregular fashion, and that it represents a cooperation with natural processes, rather than an artificial intrusion *against* nature. The facts presented by Dr. Rock in his chapter on "The Pill" certainly need careful exploration in subsequent discussion of the theological issues involved. While it is certainly not my place to suggest what Catholic moral theology may or may not declare, I would at least offer the comment that recent research has injected *new* issues into the discussion, and that we have a right to hope for more than a simple repetition of past formulas that have not really taken new facts into account.

5. But what must emerge from all of this is an attempt by both Protestants and Catholics to work out a viable *public* policy concerning the availability of birth control information to those who need it. It is here that Dr. Rock makes his most important suggestions, pleading for "a live-and-let-live policy which will protect the rights and privileges of all groups." If we proceed from the area of shared assumptions—that "family planning" or "birth control" is a legitimate concern of all married couples—then the disruptive issue is reduced to the question of who should have accessibility to what kinds of means. Dr. Rock suggests that information should be available for all couples who desire it, so that they can employ the means consistent with their religious convictions. Information about all methods should therefore be available without restrictive legislation in hospitals, clinics, public health departments, and so forth. This would mean a recognition of the right of all people to such information, and a willingness on the part of Catholics to let non-Catholics disseminate and receive information of which Catholics do not themselves approve. Dr. Rock offers five ground rules:

1. Family planning, whether by contraception or continence, is both a religious matter, involving the individual consciences of husbands and wives, and a medical problem, involving considerations of the health and well-being of families and, thus, of society.

2. The State has no competence—and no right—to legislate on the religious aspects of the problem.

3. In medical programs operated by the State, however, proper medical care normally requires the provision of family planning services. In these programs, all restrictions on birth control, written or unwritten, should be removed.

4. In public facilities, no one should be compelled to accept birth control, or to participate in a birth control program, against his will.

5. All methods of family planning, including the rhythm method, should be offered so that the adherent of any faith will be able to choose a method that accords with his own conscience.

Such a program would seem to offer a real possibility of a breakthrough in the area of public dispute. Not only would it dispel some of the acrimony from our national life, but it might be the basis for solving the even more acute problem of making such information available to underdeveloped nations. One can only hope that Dr. Rock's proposals will find acceptance among a sizable group of Roman Catholics, so that what he advocates as possible public policy can become actual public policy. The time has come, indeed.

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THE SCREEN

Cleo From 8 to 12

FULL WELL may you wonder as you watch "Cleopatra" where the $40 million went. Darryl F. Zanuck president of 20th Century-Fox, the company that made and is releasing the film, stated with finality recently that it cost $37 million, but the figure has been bandied around so much that a couple of million more or less seem to make little difference. In any case, this is the costliest movie ever made. Last record holder was "Mutiny on the Bounty" which caused viewers to wonder about its $20 million; but "Cleopatra" like "Mutiny" ran into trouble from its very start. Its false start several years ago, the illness of its main star, its new start after firings and hirings, the scandalous stories that kept it in the limelight and added a sensationalism that may not have been helpful in the long run, and mounting costs in various departments were no doubt all part of the $37 million bill. But now that "Cleopatra" is finally on our screens, the important thing is not all the extra-curricular activity, but the film itself. The play *is* the thing.

As a movie, "Cleopatra" is a yes-and-no affair not to be tossed off lightly with just "good" or "bad." Some of it is very good. It has some beautiful color photography under Leon Shamroy and some stunning sets that admirably fill the wide Todd-AO screen—sets that display the palace and harbor at Alexandria, the Roman Forum, the sumptuous golden barge on which Cleopatra floats to meet Antony, and many interiors particularly in Egypt that are awe-inspiring. It has several striking battle scenes, particularly those at the picture's beginning showing the field on which Caesar has just defeated Pompey and those later at Actium where Octavian and Antony fight it out at sea. And it has one of the most elaborate spectacles ever filmed: Cleopatra's entry into Rome. This is done on a grand scale with banners and streamers and screaming mobs and dancing girls (black and white) and pigeons (gray) and hundreds of Nubian slaves drawing a black sphinx in front of which sits Cleo magnificently arrayed in gold and ready to be received with her (and Caesar's) son. The whole long scene may have a musical-comedy aura, but it is exciting spectacle.

Some of the edge of this scene's grandeur is taken away, however, when Antony turns to Julius Caesar at the climax of this elaborate entry and says, "Nothing like this has come to Rome since Romulus and Remus." The script really tries to make the film's characters sound like people, but too often its banal dialogue makes them sound like "the people—yes." This screenplay was written by Joseph L. Mankiewicz with Ranald MacDougall and Sidney Buchman, and stems from Plutarch, Suetonius, Appian and C. M. Franzero's biography of Cleopatra. On the whole it is historically accurate, but as a screenplay it in uneven. Needless to say, it suffers by comparison with Shakespeare and Shaw, which is not fair to the script, but such are the vagaries of literature; and viewers familiar with the famous plays are naturally going to recall the more familiar high-sounding lines and phrases. Another trouble with the script, in its striving for historical completeness, is that it includes too much. But Walter Wanger, who gave the film its handsome production and had to steer it through all its troubles, and Mankiewicz, who wrote the script as well as directed the cast, forgot that an audience can grasp only so much. And "Cleopatra," with all its detail, spectacle and attempts at homey scenes, just runs too long. Four hours of "Cleopatra" (not including the intermission) wears out its audience.

Perhaps if the film were more interesting, this length wouldn't be so exhausting; but the movie has its dull spots, and many of the scenes with their unnecessary entrances and exits, are in themselves too long. As it stands, the film has been radically cut. It should be cut more—and tightened. "Cleopatra" is actually two movies put together. Its first half concentrates on Julius Caesar, his trip to Alexandria to see what gives with Cleopatra and her brother, his straightening them out —to her satisfaction, and his staying on and on to have a long affair with her, an affair that might have run longer except for his return to Rome where she follows him several years later with their son and is on hand when the assassins do away with her idol. Rex Harrison is excellent as Caesar, giving the picture its best performance and holding his audience with his suave portrayal of a middle-aged politician who has time for an affair with a young girl, but who hasn't lost his political ambitions. Perhaps Harrison is a bit too sophisticated, but it is a fascinating portrait. Caesar's death ends the first half of the film.

After the intermission, Antony, who has been on the sidelines, swings into action. He is a man of action, fighting to hold his position—and losing the battle when he comes under Cleopatra's sway. Richard Burton plays the role with his fine, sonorous diction, but his Antony is an indecisive man, one too easily caught by the ambitions and desires of the Queen of the Nile. It is difficult to understand why the makers of this film didn't choose an outstanding actress for the role of Cleopatra who is after all the key figure in this lengthy story. Elizabeth Taylor is extraordinarily beautiful in some of her scenes, but the film needs more than beauty, especially since Cleopatra herself was most likely not this beautiful. The Queen who won wily Caesar and reduced Antony to a vassal had great charm and acumen. Miss Taylor, startling in vivid make-ups (especially those sequins on her eyelids) and a series

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of low-cut costumes that leave little to the imagination, has little of the regal quality that must have been Cleopatra's. Perhaps another actress, not necessarily so pretty or shapely, would have suggested the queenly Cleopatra through a penetrating performance even in more modest costumes.

Outstanding in the film's supporting cast is Roddy McDowall as sly, sickly, somewhat effeminate Octavian. He becomes the villain of the piece in the Antony-Cleopatra half of the movie and he gives it much of its vitality and he successfully suggests the Augustus Caesar that Octavian will become. Also effective in supporting roles are Hume Cronyn as Cleopatra's adviser, Cesare Donova as Appollodorus, Kenneth Haigh, George Cole, Martin Landau, and others. No doubt most viewers will be divided in their reactions to a movie as lengthy, costly, and talked about as this "Cleopatra." It will have its admirers and detractors. My greatest disappointment in it was that is wasn't livelier and that I had to look in vain for the Cleopatra described: "Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale her infinite variety." PHILIP T. HARTUNG

CORRESPONDENCE

"Women and Rhythm"

Cambridge, Mass.

TO THE EDITORS: Father Henry V. Sattler's letter [Apr. 26], as the Editors pointed out, clearly represents the theoretical dilemma facing many Catholics in the present moral conflict about birth control. Musing aloud, Father Sattler seems unable to decide clearly between contrasting "attitudes": reliance on Providence, responsible parenthood, reluctant use of rhythm under modern pressures, the complaints of women that their education is being wasted. Father Sattler knows that "cold calculation" and mere "technical planning" (which he takes contraception to be) are inhuman and immoral. But he is uncomfortable about how to conceptualize any ideal of birth regulation at all: he fears that even the use of rhythm might lead "to the more 'logical' practice of contraception." His restlessness about attitudes indicates the murkiness and uncertainty all of us feel, confronted with the conflicting moral demands in which we work out our lives.

The public discussion of Dr. Rock's book, *The Time has Come,* is bringing out other lacunae in Catholic thinking about married love. For there is a striking dearth of theological writing about the mode of Christian life in which sexual love plays a major sanctifying role. The emphasis of the Church Fathers was on virginity and the celibate life, concerning which there are perhaps a hundred treatises to every one on sexual love. I would like to suggest two lines of consideration, which may prove of some assistance in the layman's articulation of those things which now we grope to express.

The first of these is to note that in his discussion of this question, as humanistic and sane here as in many other areas, Aquinas stressed the communal aspect of sex. Our own age is still inclined to be overly individualistic in its moral thinking, and in the question of sexual love exaggerated individualism encourages misleading romantic notions. One of the foundations of the morality of sexual love is the need of the race for children to perpetuate it: "What food is to the preservation of the body, so is sexual intercourse to the preservation of the race." Thus Aquinas (*S. T. II-II, q.153, a.2*) quotes from Augustine (*De Bono Conjug., 16*). This traditional emphasis on the social foundation of the biological imperative may prove to be of great importance in the discussion of population growth on the finite earth.

Secondly, an accurate conceptualization of the personal side of intercourse is also badly needed. Thinking at present seems to oscillate between two extremes, the first of which holds that sex is, after all, self-indulgent, perhaps a necessary weakness, and certainly in need of careful hedging and conditioning if it is to be "used" at all. We may call this the biological view of sex, and call its precautionary ethic sexual tutiorism. At the other extreme is the mystique of sex not uncommon in our age, the exaltation of the sexual act, the inclination to view sexual expression as the culmination of personal development and marital union. The mysticism, I think, feeds many of those in the Planned Parenthood movement, and the sexual tutiorism is the weapon usually grasped by the Defenders Against Planned Parenthood.

Married laymen, it seems, are the Catholics in the best position to develop an accurate, realistic theory of personal sex. It is they who live out the psychological and physiological laws involved in marital love-play and intercourse. It is they, then, who develop the moral sense and the connaturality proper to the liturgy of sex. It seems such married laymen have an obligation to articulate their experience of Christian life, for this experience is quite different in mode from that articulated in the many treatises on abstinence and virginity prepared through the ages for the guidance of clergy and religious.

The starting-place, it seems to me, lies in treating sexual love as the marital liturgy; intercourse is the ordinary, concrete, dramatic expression of the I-Thou relationship between husband and wife, though it is also more than that. Such a rite is not egocentric or self-indulgent, unless it violates its own very symbolism. Nor is it, as C. S. Lewis suggests in *The Four Loves,* easy to perform well; it makes great demands on and hence enriches both lovers. Good humor and lightness

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are required; to approach it pretentiously, with too-high seriousness, or too-weighty expectations, or on the other hand as a matter of fact and merely as a means to an end, will end in difficulty for the one person or the other. There is a great need for a concrete ethics concerning the demands made by the I-Thou relationship upon marital lovemaking. Initiates will express best this day-to-day role of sex in married life. Neither mystical self-fulfillment nor self-indulgence describe the reality.

Finally, not all Catholics who write on birth control, not even Father Sattler in his letter, are clear that the present crisis is a *moral* crisis. The great dilemma for the devout Catholic is not a choice between indulgence and duty; it is a choice among many duties. Parents are obliged to educate each child they bring into the world to a degree never exacted before. Their standards of medical care, nutrition, and recreation are also higher. Finally, more acute professional demands are made on the parents than formerly. The devout parent does not always see how to reconcile all these demands. Where the family is already large and rhythm is not successful, the pitch of moral crisis among many laymen can scarcely be overestimated.

MICHAEL NOVAK

Washington, D. C.

TO THE EDITORS: Obviously the response to your editorial "Women and Rhythm" (March 8) has pointed up a great need. Your own caustic comment, postscripted to my lengthy effusion, and several protesting answers (June 7) lead me to keep the pot boiling. I feel that intelligent discussion among Catholics, both lay and clerical, is imperative in this area.

I fear I must, as a priest, be concerned (though, please God, not excessively) about the attitudes that may be "lurking in Catholic shadows." Since moral decisions can only be made by considering objective morality, circumstances and *motivation*, a priest is not a priest unless he can ask his audience from the pulpit and in his writings to examine hidden motivations absorbed from the secularism which is always with us. It is true "that Catholics must do their own thinking in their own Christian context"; but that Christian *context* must be constantly reaffirmed. I find too many secularistic fibers in my own motivations to believe that a Christian context can be taken for granted by any of us. I hope this does not make of me a cowardly reactionary who is "sensitive only to danger" nor preclude me from the ranks of the reasonable liberals who are "sensitive to opportunity."

I certainly agree with Fathers John C. Ford, S.J., and Gerald Kelly, S.J., that: "Procreation . . . should be undertaken above all under the guidance of supernatural prudence." The problem is the discovery and implementation of the principles which lead the married couple to acquire facility in the practice of this supernatural virtue.

The letter of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Born (June 7) makes good points for discussion. It is, very definitely, the prerogative of any spiritual leader to *raise the question* of a sufficient reason for the use of rhythm and the principles which should apply. However, it may not be the prerogative of the priest advisor to *answer the question!* In days gone by (thank God!) the questions often could not be raised, nor were simple Catholics capable of answering the question, if raised. They depended upon the directives of the only educated man in the community—the priest. He often (wrongly?) made all prudential decisions for his flock. Now that we have an intelligent and well educated laity, we must, I agree, leave the decision to the married couple. But, when we do, we must make certain they know the Christian principles which apply, so that they can come to a supernaturally prudent decision.

I find nothing in my letter of dependence upon divine intervention as a *deus ex machina*. My strictures were upon *worldly* prudence, not upon supernatural prudence informed by the gift of counsel.

I disagree with Bishop Bekkers that "this is a matter of conscience, which is nobody else's business," though I notice that he clarifies this with the suggestion that "a clergyman . . . must respect *as much as possible* that personal conscience." The formation of a Christian conscience—a Christian ability to make moral decisions—is the function of the priest who speaks to the lay Christian with some ecclesiastical authority. It is no refusal to recognize human dignity, freedom of thought, and rights of conscience which urge me to propose a look at all the circumstances before the rhythm-decision is made. Circumspection (looking at all the facts) is an important part of prudent decision.

I have no doubt that Mrs. Sara S. Bonnen (June 7) is doing a far better educational job than she thinks. If she is truly a liberally educated woman, her heavy tasks of motherhood are not destroying her educational effect upon her children. I do not think I am idyllic when I suggest that even her lullabies and conversation have great positive effect.

Far from being raised "in a world of nannies, cooks and parlormaids," I was raised by a fifth-grade father and a seventh-grade mother who nursed me through six major illnesses without the help of washing machine, electricity, central heating, inside plumbing or antibiotics. My father was lucky—he had work (!) from seven to seven, six days a week. And yet we were given an insatiable appetite for reading and study. My only regrets are that my bi-lingual parents refused to speak German for fear of slowing down our school work, and that they were unable to guide our choice of reading. Though their own reading did not go beyond the pages of the daily newspaper, they practiced the "absence of

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knowledge" which enlarged their children's hunger for it.

Far from being insensitive to difficulties faced by mothers, I have worked with families of every educational and economic level throughout the country. I have no problem with the "Mrs. Bonnens" who are anxious to do more for their children, but I am concerned for some (few, I hope!) intelligent mothers who are fleeing from the frighteningly deep questions and behavior problems of their children.

I must insist upon the conclusion of my last letter: "By all means let us discover all there is to know about human reproduction and make available an effective rhythm for the families which, before God, wisely choose to use it; but let us also provide the Christian context in which the decision can be made. An effective rhythm is not the answer by itself."

(*Rev.*) HENRY V. SATTLER, C.SS.R.,
Asst. Director, Family Life Bureau,
Natl. Catholic Welfare Conference

"Hoffa Forever?"

Brooklyn, N. Y.

TO THE EDITORS: Part of Mr. O'Gara's recent confusion with regard to the Teamsters Union ("Hoffa Forever?" May 24) derives from his faulty image of the union. Without denying the existence and even domination of the union by gangsters, I contend that the Teamsters have a positive side. Indeed, in our essentially bourgeois society with its centrist political traditions, its unwarranted praises for economic individualism, and its complacency and hypocrisy on issues of social democracy, the Teamsters have been, unwittingly perhaps, effective agents of radical reform.

This assertion is not far-fetched. First, the Teamsters have been perceptive social critics of "the affluent society." Their recent report on poverty in New York City was the best criticism yet proffered of the complacent city administration. Secondly, in politics, the Teamsters have awakened some radical hopes. It seems incontrovertible that democracy in southern Texas was advanced considerably when the Teamsters-backed Mexican-Americans overthrew part of the region's white Democratic oligarchy. Thirdly, in economic matters, the Teamsters' avowed intention of placing under one contract all of the nation's trucking concerns is a welcome development, at least for radicals interested in consolidating a national economic system in which government intervention will be both feasible and effective.

Fourthly, the entire labor movement has received some new life from the organizing efforts of the Teamsters. After the lethargic AFL-CIO leadership had all but abandoned the struggle to unionize the fruitpickers in California, the Teamsters succeeded not only in organizing this genuine proletariat, but also gained for them from the reactionary growers improved wages and working conditions. Fifthly, in cultural matters, the Teamsters have shattered the dream of America as a middle-class utopia. They are unabashedly proletarian in style and outlook, and do derive their strength, in part at least, from their class consciousness. More disturbing is the fact that the rise of their class consciousness can be attributed to actual class conflict. In this regard, more important than the obvious middle-class opposition to the Teamsters has been the essentially anti-labor posture of the federal government. Surely, after three years of high unemployment, President Kennedy's policies on automation must be termed anti-labor. Significantly, the Teamsters have already indentified and attacked the enemy, though perhaps for different reasons.

In summary, to view the Teamsters as cynical products of a sub-culture and as a glorified gangster movement is being less than fair. To describe their class consciousness as an "us against the world mentality" and to overlook the seeds of labor-capital strife at the present time is naive and shortsighted. Actually, crimes aside, the Teamsters have about them much of the dynamism of a radical reform movement. Where complacency has prevailed, the Teamsters have been critical and activist. Where underprivileged labor was concerned, the Teamsters have demonstrated leadership. Where some trade unionists have been lazy and bourgeois, the Teamsters have been persistent and class conscious. Mr. O'Gara perhaps would be less perplexed by the Teamsters' vote in favor of Mr. Hoffa if he were to realize that some of the union's members quite naturally may have attributed to the present leadership, if not some of the radicalism, at least some of the dynamism.

JOHN FRANCIS FLYNN

On The Death of Father James Kittleson

Alone along Montana's marshy weirs
The long-billed curlew, Hopkins-hoped, he spied
God's hovering minions. Now their shrieks are tears,
The geysered glebes all-palléd.
He has died.
The wand-brisk brush is snapped, the pages pressed,
All myrtles seared, green windows—darkened—weep.
Each heart a linnet lost, all skies distressed;
The shroud-cloud plaintive plains their vigil keep.
And yet the implication of the heed
And hum of life, of labor, of God's Law,
Calls up his thrill of action, thought and deed;
Beside his giant-joy we're dwarfed in awe.
Our Curlew, wheeling on the eddy's heist,
Keens not. But, cross-like, beckons us to Christ!

CHRISTIAN STEVENS

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One Man's Fancy

The Pitfalls of Pratfalls

AT SOME point in his densely improbable memoirs, Ford Madox Ford came up against the question of borrowing from other writers. Well, why not, said Ford, with his usual magisterial slyness—why not borrow? Anything to get away from one's own style, the monotony of one's own rhythms. . . . The mature artist often yearns in this way to shed his own style. From being the thing that made him good in the first place, his style gradually becomes the thing that keeps him from getting better; it decks every new idea in last year's feathers; it stamps the author's personality over all his work, like the same moustache on a row of different paintings.

The latest Boulting Brother's film "Heavens Above" is a victim of this kind of over-ripe, personal style. It is based on a very good idea—the idea Thornton Wilder used slightly differently in "Heaven's My Destination": that a Christian who actually believed all of Christ's teaching would cause chaos at every turn—and blessed by a very good performance by Peter Sellers. (Sellers as a disembodied voice has always been funny; but his body sometimes narrows his range.)

But "Heavens Above" is also scattered with all the usual Boulting devices, the old sight-gags and whimsical cross-cutting (Sellers falling into an open grave, cut to somebody saying "I expect he's put his foot in it already"—that kind of thing.) Accuracy of tone is sacrificed again and again for the automatic laughs that in the end make "Heavens Above" a Boulting Film rather than an independent entity.

It seems to be the essence of the Boulting style never to pass up a laugh however much it weakens the film as a whole (the sum of their films never equals the parts). A good comedy has to make certain sacrifices; its author can't, like some Chinese examination candidate, simply put down everything funny he knows. The best comedies, from the high ones like "The Philadelphia Story" to the low ones like "The Bank Dick," contain no jokes that are not relevant to theme and mood. The biggest laugh in "The Philadelphia Story" comes when Cary Grant says "There goes George"—a line that means nothing at all outside the story. (By contrast, the Boultings use quite a few detachable, non-organic jokes, e.g., Ian Carmichael.)

Theme has absolute rights in any kind of art: no joke has the smallest claims against it. When people say that the English make such fine comedies, they overlook the chronic sins against theme that so often reduce English films to stylized variety shows. The best English comedies are frequently nothing more than pleasant, literate compendiums of gags. It is significant that India-rubber men like Peter Sellers and Alec Guinness are found to be the perfect stars for them. For these films do not require comedians, either high or low, so much as humorous stunt-men who can ride with all the possible varieties of joke.

It is this same cavalier approach to art that used to infuriate Ford Madox Ford and Henry James so much with the middle-class English novel. There again, a genial approach and bags of amusing characters were thought to do duty for thematic development; intensity was allowed to cool while some amusing old fellow was affectionately considered, and his mannerisms held up to the light; old gardeners and nannies rambled on interminably—well, they don't do that anymore anyway. But the fixation with character-vignettes carried over from what Ford used to call the "nuvvle" remains. In the last little English comedy but one, "The Wrong Arm of the Law," the whole film was sacrificed to a fatuous police inspector. Fellow was funny enough for a few minutes, but the writers milked him until there was no film left; they put him in zany, slapstick situations that swung the satire gauge violently from light to heavy and made nonsense of the whole story.

THE BOULTING style is, in part, a sophisticated version of an old tradition. In English comic novels, the characters were waved on by funny names like Mrs. Bluebottle and Uncle Ramsbottom: which was another way of saying this story didn't really happen but isn't it an amusing idea? In the Boulting films familiar character actors serve roughly the same function. Their established routines and mannerisms can never be sub-

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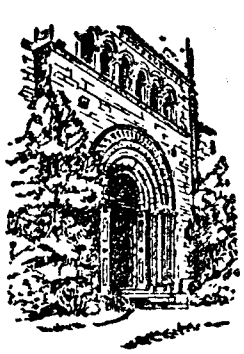

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sumed into any plot but their presence makes for a pleasant, relaxed relationship between author and audience.

Perhaps it is considered rather pompous in England to take comic art seriously (bad enough to take any art seriously); at any rate Shaw and Wilde are the only "English" playwrights I can think of who openly referred to their stuff as art. The English fear of pomposity is reasonable enough, when you think of what they've been through, but inhibiting also, even to comedy. Comic art is as detached and austere as any other art: it allows no easy familiarity with the audience, no winking and mugging, but the narrowest concentration on the task in hand. This inevitably makes it a serious, committed business.

"The Importance of Being Ernest" is almost the perfect comedy, because of its ruthless consistency: the unearthly consistency of a dream. The Marx Brothers at their best have the same quality. Whatever the level of unreality decided upon for a comedy, it must be adhered to monkishly—almost, you could say, humorlessly. A pratfall in "The Importance of Being Ernest" would be blasphemous; so would topical references in "Animal Crackers." I have an uneasy feeling the Boulting Brothers would try both.

The relation of plot to character is slightly off-key in almost all their comedies (incidentally, the Boultings are the ones picked on here simply because they are the best around). The plot is either more or less unreal than the people; the people are more or less unreal than each other; the plot is plausible one minute, wild the next. This gives an effect of constant improvisation and manipulation; the stories have no life of their own, all the life is in the Boultings themselves.

ENGLISH middle-brow art wastes a prodigious amount of talent. There are enough good ideas in a Boulting film to spark six good films; instead they use all the ideas in one film and then make the film six times. It is always just slightly disappointing. (We write the same review six times, too.)

Since it is not want of talent, it must be some sort of temperamental unwillingness, that keeps people like the Boultings from attempting comic perfection. In "I'm all right, Jack," they did find the perfect mating of style and theme; but since then they have simply slapped the same style onto everything in sight, church, politics, the law—never allowing the subjects to develop their own style, but always "The Boulting Brothers go to Church . . . to Court . . . to prison. . . ."

The resulting trickle of pleasant pictures has been worth having—just as the novels that James and Ford deprecated had their moments. It could be that when English writers go in for "art" they feel too self-conscious to go all the way with it. Certainly the best of the "Bloomsbury" writers was E. M. Forster, who didn't

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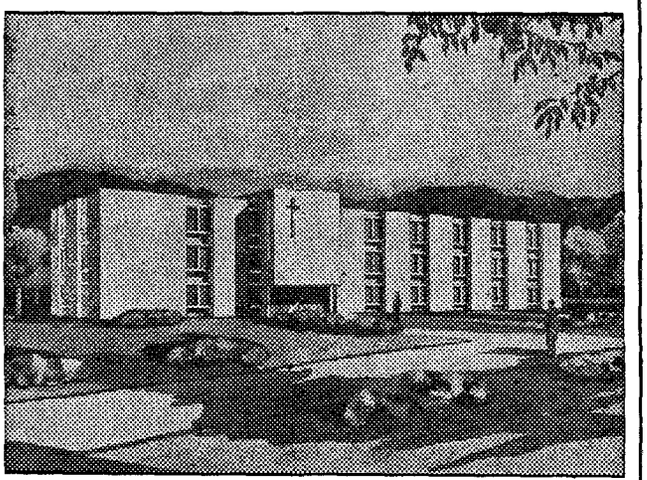

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scruple to sacrifice art for geniality in the middle-brow manner, and who often stuck his head through his own stories to wink or sigh gently at the audience in a way that would have given Flaubert fits. (Arty Englishmen can hardly help remembering that they manage these things better in France.)

The English are traditionally at their happiest in the shapeless novel, and the stage-revue, where wit can fire off in all directions and where ingenuity and personal style count far more than structure. But there are certainly exceptions to this. Evelyn Waugh, for instance, is a serious comic artist; not a humorist, but an artist in humor. Here you find the highest narrowness and consistency, a vision that is never thrown away in crowd-pleasing asides. Mr. Waugh's books have perfect integrity: nothing is allowed into them unless, so to speak, it is already there. The miniature work is as elegant and necessary as the parts of a Swiss watch.

If Mr. Waugh or someone like him would condescend to make some movies, it might be possible to talk about great English comedies; as it is, it is very pleasant to have the Boultings around. Their comedies are much better than anything Hollywood has done recently—better than anything since the great high comedies of the thirties ("My Man, Godfrey," "Ninotchka," etc.).

Maybe the Boultings should take a tip from Ford and borrow somebody else's style for a while—an exchange might be worked out with Alfred Hitchcock who seems to be having the same kind of trouble—or maybe they could somehow manage to tighten up their own. It is a shame to see such wit and imagination attached to anything less than first-rate achievements.

WILFRID SHEED

(Wilfrid Sheed, the author of "A Middle-Class Education," contributes a regular monthly column to these pages.)

BOOKS

Modern Epistles to an Inquiring Young Student

That the World May Believe. By Hans Küng. Sheed and Ward. $3.

by Gregory Baum

FATHER KUNG's book is concerned with translating the acquisitions of the ecumenical movement into terms applicable to the world by the average person, especially by the young. While the writings of ecumenists are often technical and theological in presentation (and they should be) and therefore not immediately available to the uninitiated, the ecumenical movement has now reached a point in its development where its simple and practical insights should be applied in daily life in order to reshape our attitudes to others.

The task of re-forming some of these basic attitudes is not confined to our relationship to Protestants. We are witnessing in the Church today a development of doctrine comparable to the developments in other ages in regard to the Eucharist or the Blessed Virgin Mary. Today we are dealing with the Church's relationship to the world, to society in general and to Protestants, Jews and other religions in particular. This is not simply a question of making our attitudes more "modern" or more "liberal"; it is really a matter of understanding more deeply the meaning of Christ's Gospel for creation. The encyclical *Pacem in Terris* is an example of the evolution of the Church's understanding of her own role in human society and of God's action in history.

Though Father Küng's book is small and does not cover all the areas of anxious concern to young people, it is a real attempt to give practical counsel based on authentic theology. Some of his views may strike the reader as rather free; but they are never proposed as common-sense advice or the wisdom of an easy conformity to the world, but always as the demanding imperative of the Gospel.

A book of this kind, simple as it is, shows convincingly that the well-spring of the ecumenical movement is not a humanistic or naturalistic ideal, but on the contrary a rigorous supernaturalism, stemming from the conviction that God in His mercy has intervened in the history of mankind, first in Israel and finally in Christ, to save humanity from itself and reconcile all men to Him. The only humanism which Father Küng professes is the modest, confident humanism of the Christian who believes that God has irrevocably fallen in love with mankind and that therefore His healing grace is operative everywhere.

Until now the Christian Church has never known an age in which the radical emphasis on Jesus Christ as the sole mediator between heaven and earth inspired a universal and positive approach to humanity, to human culture, and to separated Christians, as we find it expressed in *Pacem in Terris* and Father Küng's little book. This does not mean, of course, that we blind ourselves today to the evils of the world, in ourselves and in others, but rather that we believe that the redemptive power of the Lord is already active in the universe, saving men from their self-destructive tendencies and enabling all of us to move towards that unity which is God's plan for humanity.

Father Küng's book consists of several letters written by a professor of theology to a young man, presumably a student, in answer to the kind of questions that are in the mind of our generation. The book was written in a German environment, yet it also fits our own situation in North America, although there is, perhaps, one difficulty in reading the book here. The Protestants he constantly refers to are basically traditional Protestant Christians, Lutherans, who accept the Gospel in the light of the ancient creeds and the liturgical tradition

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of their own Church; once he specifically refers to "Lutherans, Anglicans, and Freechurchmen." On our continent, however, the Protestant world is mainly made up of Freechurchmen, although the word is never used. Because of the influence of the sectarian movement and a widespread rejection of the great Christian tradition, American Protestantism is really quite different from that of the European continent.

It seems to me that the first thing we have to learn in our association with Protestants on this continent is that they differ among themselves. We must distinguish between those who have committed themselves to the Lord now present to mankind in Word and sacrament, and those who regard religion simply as man's approach to God: we must distinguish between those who seek to relate their religious convictions to the universal Christian experience and those whose exclusiveness tends to sever them from modern life as well as from the great Christian traditions. We must get used to the fact that these dividing lines no longer pass along denominational borders, but cut right across them. These lines, moreover, are rapidly shifting, since the movements of renewal are as active within American Protestantism as they are within the Catholic Church.

Brazil's Identity

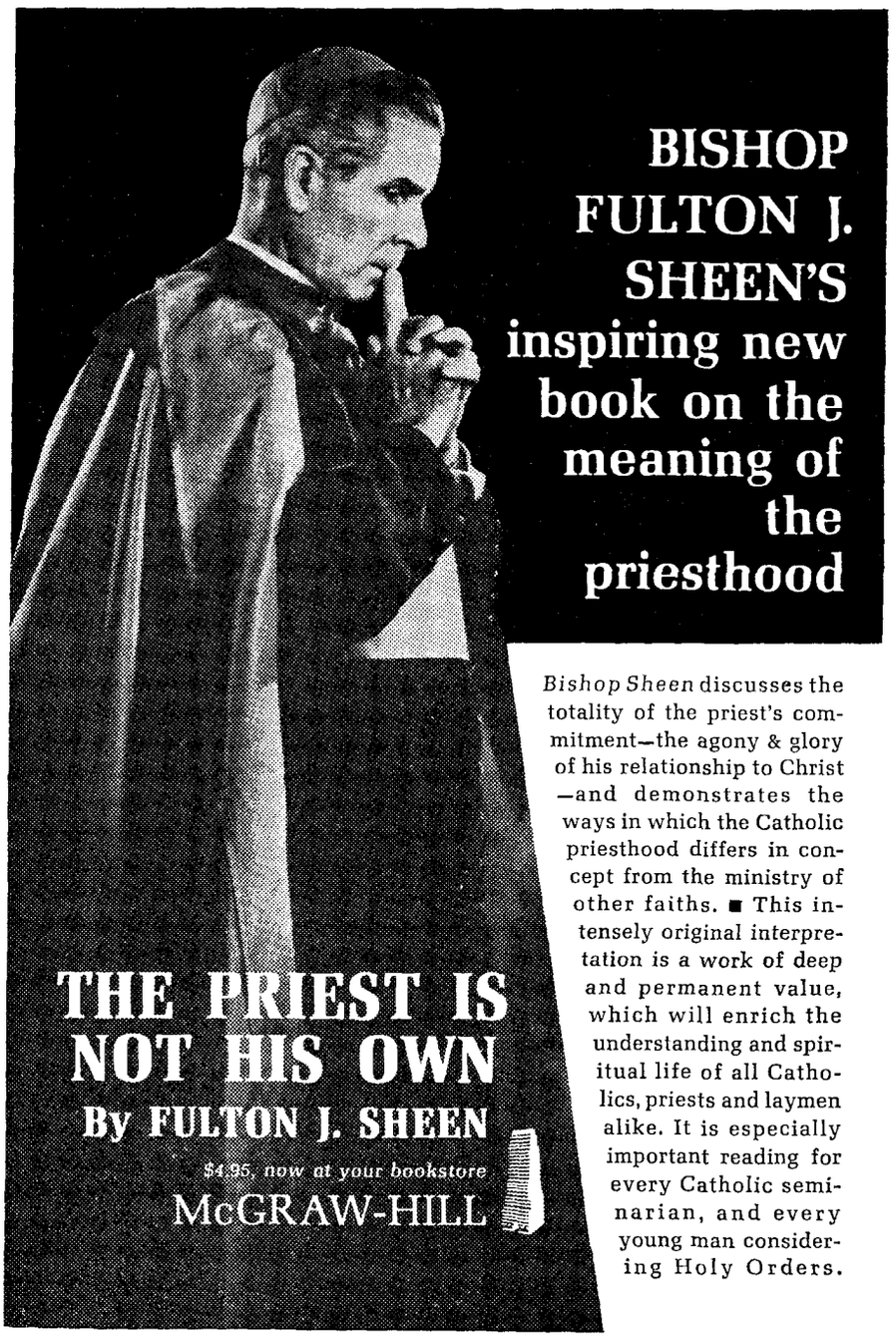
The Mansions and the Shanties. By Gilberto Freyre. Edited and translated from the Portuguese by Harriet De Onis. Introduction by Frank Tannenbaum. Knopf. $10.

by Victor C. Ferkiss

BRAZIL is the giant of Latin America. With a land area larger than continental United States, a rapidly growing population (roughly half that of all South America) and vast natural resources, Brazil has the potential of becoming a major world power. Though plagued by grave political and economic problems accentuated by the sharp contrast between the largely rural and impoverished north and the more prosperous urban south, Brazil's power and influence have been expanding in recent decades, and Brazilian architecture, music, art and literature are making the world increasingly aware of her distinct cultural identity.

The rise of Brazil on the cultural horizon has been affected to a remarkable degree by the work of one giant among the Brazilian intelligentsia, Gilberto Freyre. Throughout his life, Freyre's principal concern has been the problem of Brazilian identity. A scholar, humanist and democrat, Freyre has been a major influence on a whole generation of Brazilian intellectuals.

As a young man Freyre studied anthropology under Franz Boas at Columbia in an attempt to find a key to the question of how a nation of mixed racial origin should regard itself. As Freyre has written, " . . . of all the questions confronting Brazil there was none that gave me so much anxiety as that of miscegenation. "Under the influence of Boas, Freyre made the fundamental distinction between race and culture which has been the characteristic mark of all his subsequent work.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Freyre is primarily a cultural historian, but he makes free use of the tools and insights of anthropology, sociology, psychology and linguistics to build his "creative image" of Brazil. His intention is a "merging of the analytic and organic approaches to man" in a manner similar to that of Picasso in painting. For Freyre, as for most contemporary anthropologists, culture is an integrated whole, and even the most seemingly trivial details have a place in the pattern.

The application of this method to so vast and complex a society as Brazil offers obvious difficulties. The particular details upon which Freyre chooses to rest his case may not be as representative as he assumes. But one cannot but be charmed by the profusion of details—about food, dress, architecture, work, recreation, religion, and sex—and the rare insight Freyre brings to their interpretation and interrelation. In a style that is discursive (and sometimes repetitive) he convincingly makes his point: that Brazil is a unique blend of racial and cultural elements from Europe, Africa, the Orient, and the Americas; that this mixture is a source of strength rather than weakness; that it is only by respecting and building upon its unique characteristics—not by aping European customs and institutions (something attempted by the elites of Brazil as well as elsewhere in Latin America) that Brazil can fulfill its national destiny. Through emphasizing the intimate interrelation between natural environment and culture, Freyre necessarily comes into conflict with the Marxist interpretation of history, with liberal idolators of nineteenth century European bourgeois industrial society and with those Catholics who sought by means of strictly classical education to create in Brazil a pseudo-Roman civilization.

More than any other single individual Freyre has helped Brazilians come to terms with their national heritage and achieve consciousness as a people. For Freyre, the blending of cultures, miscegenation, and the rise of descendants of slaves to positions of influence and power have been no catastrophe but a source of strength. Under the tropic sun a new world was born which is destined to be a prototype for new nations throughout the tropics. Brazil's role as a world leader will be the result of its unique cultural synthesis.

In his first major work, *The Masters and the Slaves* (originally published in 1933), Freyre traces the inception of Brazilian culture to the close intimacy between white masters and Negro slaves in the "big houses" and slave quarters of patriarchal rural Brazil. *The Mansions and the Shanties*, published in Brazil in 1936, emphasizes the interpenetration of the different cultures in an urban setting as Brazil becomes the seat of the Portuguese empire, abolishes slavery, and enters the modern world—unsure of its own self-image—still colonial in mentality and rejecting the new society it was creating in spite of itself.

For the non-Brazilian reader, emotionally uninvolved in the issue of Brazilian national identity, the appeal of Freyre's work is still manifold. It provides an opportunity to gain an understanding of the inner dynamics of an important, neglected

The Commonweal Idea

AS A LAY-EDITED MAGAZINE The Commonweal has no "official" status within the Church. It cannot speak for the Church nor can it pretend to claim that its editorial views represent even an unofficial consensus. It is a "Catholic publication" only in the sense that its editors are Catholic laymen whose judgments are informed by their dedication to their religious convictions.

Yet in the thirty-eight years since its founding, the editors of The Commonweal have never looked upon its unofficial status as a handicap. On the contrary it has served to emphasize a vital requirement of Catholic life: that in his day-to-day life the Christian is called upon to apply, as a fallible man, his religious principles to the flux and flow of human events. . . .

American Catholics are now willing to take a close look at their own performance, to measure their ideals against the reality of their actions. At the same time, a new awareness of the importance of the laity in the Church has burst upon the scene with astonishing force. Taken together these changes have meant a period of intense ferment, of bold thought and an honest examination of conscience. . . .

It is this drive for confrontation which has earned for The Commonweal the reputation of being a "liberal" weekly. It is not a description we would disavow. On the contrary, as nothing else ever could, the great wisdom of Popes Pius XII and John XXIII seems to us to have swept away forever the notion that the Catholic must only protect and preserve; or that the modern world is alien to the Church. No: the Catholic must be a "man for all seasons." That is what we stand for.

—from the February 15th issue

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and appealing culture—one which, despite flaws, has gone further toward solving the problem of Negro-white relations than any segment of the globe where they are a major issue. The fact that Brazil is numerically the world's largest Catholic nation makes Freyre's work of special interest to Catholics (he regards the immense influence of Catholicism in Brazil as a force both for good and evil; while recognizing its role in humanizing the relations between the races, he deplores the efforts of the Jesuits to control the shape of Brazilian society.

Ironically, although his pioneering work is now so fully accepted that it is almost taken for granted, and although his international reputation continues to grow, Freyre's star appears to be waning at home. He has always placed heavy emphasis on the special fitness of the Portuguese to create Euro-African societies in the tropics. At present the agony of repression and rebellion in Portuguese Africa haunts the Brazilian consciousness, and the Portuguese position has steadily lost support and even respect in Brazil. At the same time Brazil is making a strong bid for the leadership of Latin America —and is therefore stressing common Hispanic origins; it is even seeking stronger ties with Spain. In this atmosphere Freyre's near romanticization of Portuguese influence in racial and cultural matters is increasingly under fire. But it is only because of the liberating influence of Freyre's humane, democratic approach to the problem of Brazilian identity that his countrymen are now ready to reject him for what may prove to be an even broader conception of the meaning and potential role of the Brazilian experience. Whatever the future may hold, the work of Gilberto Freyre is an important contribution to a deeper understanding not only of Brazilian culture but of that of all mankind.

REVIEWERS

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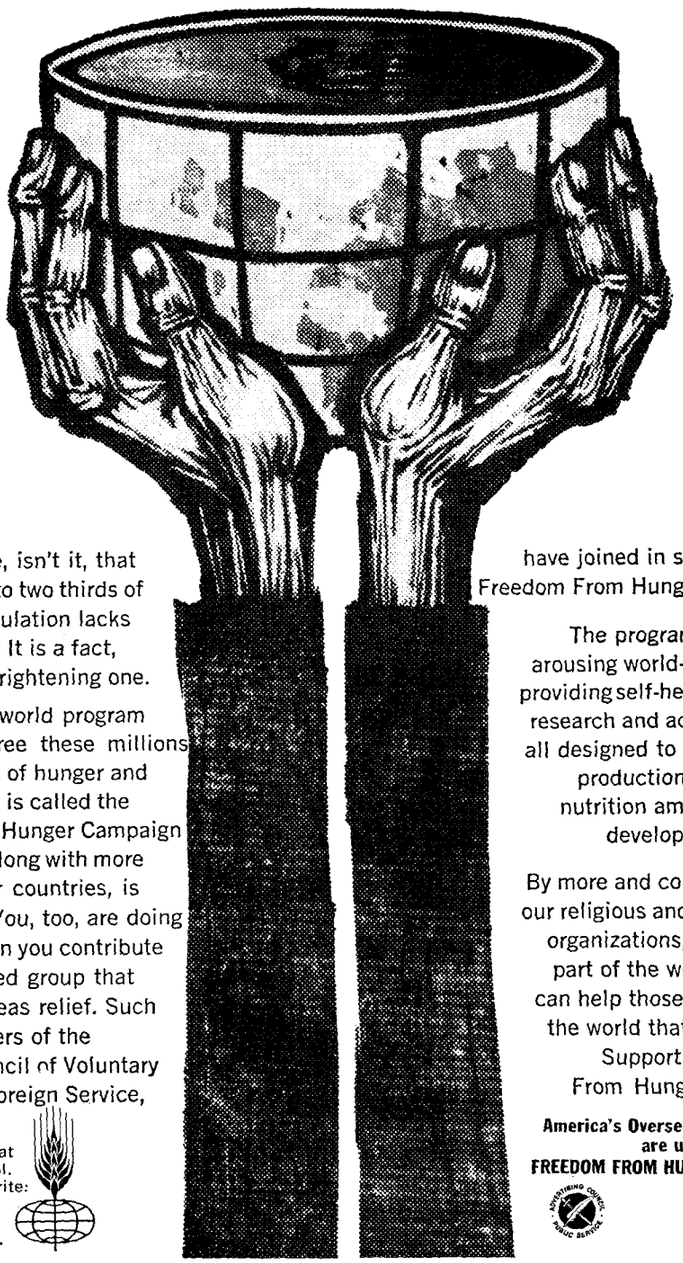
half the world goes hungry



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